

Charnwood Local Plan – Post Hearing Consultation Response

Loughborough & District Cycle Users' Campaign

Thank you for consulting me on the new documents prepared for the Charnwood Local Plan examination. Please see below my response to the Draft Transport Strategy (EXAM75), on behalf of Loughborough & District Cycle Users' Campaign.

The comments here are mainly on the proposed highway improvements, some of which will make the roads more dangerous for cycling, walking and wheeling. We have already responded to the consultation on the Loughborough LCWIP, which we regard as somewhat lacking in ambition to improve conditions for active travel. On passenger transport, we would simply point out that Demand Responsive Transport is only appropriate for the most rural areas, which does not include the Soar Valley with its string of large villages and small towns on both sides of the valley. Furthermore, we consider that the recent announcement of the continuation of the £2 bus fare cap should be taken as an opportunity for a major effort to improve both the services and the patronage of those services.

While the document has many references to the need to encourage sustainable transport modes, the proposed highway improvements do nothing to encourage active travel, and in some cases will discourage it. Given that the objective is to mitigate the risk of increased traffic congestion following residential and other developments proposed in the draft Local Plan, and that encouraging active travel as an alternative to private car use will provide such mitigation, it is important that nothing in the travel environment should discourage walking, cycling or wheeling.

In more detail:-

M1 Junction 23: while an improved cycle and pedestrian bridge over the M1 would be welcome, a more urgent priority is to improve the cycle path alongside the A512 to the west of this junction, as far as the junction with Charnwood Road. In particular, a section of the path opposite the entrance to the Newhurst Energy Recovery Facility is of very substandard width, and needs to be widened, which may require redesigning the junction to the Energy Recovery Facility in order to reallocate road space to the cycle path. The path also crosses vehicular accesses to many commercial and industrial premises, where the priority needs to be changed to give cyclists on the path priority over vehicles emerging from these premises, as recommended in LTN1/20.

Epinal Way / Warwick Way: widening and lengthening the flare lanes would encourage higher speeds from motorists, causing increased danger to pedestrians and cyclists crossing the arms of the roundabout. This roundabout is close to the shops and other facilities at Gorse Covert, which are a major journey attractor, and so it is essential that the design is improved for walking, cycling and wheeling. A cycle facility should be provided around the entire perimeter of the roundabout: see Section 10.7 of LTN1/20 for suitable designs.

Epinal Way / Alan Moss Road: again, the flare lanes should not be lengthened, for the same reasons mentioned above. Improvements to make cycle facilities compliant with LTN1/20 would be helpful, but given the presence of a signalised crossing just south of the roundabout, they are not as urgent as at the Warwick Way junction.

Epinal Way / Beacon Road: again, we object to the longer and wider flare due to the increased danger to cyclists and pedestrians crossing roundabout arms. We are puzzled as to why a segregated left turn bypass is proposed here; no such facility is being proposed at any of the other roundabouts, so why at the roundabout with the least busy

road crossing Epinal Way? In any case, this would worsen conditions for cyclists and pedestrians proceeding along Beacon Road, adding an extra element of danger for cyclists staying on the carriageway (as they would encounter vehicles using the bypass while cycling into town along Beacon Road), or causing further delay to cyclists and pedestrians using the new toucan crossing over the bypass in addition to the existing crossing over Epinal Way.

Epinal Way / Park Road: no improvements are proposed here, even though this is probably the most problematic (for motorists as well as cyclists and pedestrians) of all the roundabouts on the A6004. The existing facilities for cyclists and pedestrians are a complete mess, for example with a signalised crossing over Park Road in the wrong position for users of the cycle path alongside Epinal Way. The roundabout needs a complete redesign, compliant with LTN1/20. This is urgent, given the heavy use of the junction due to the retail facilities around it.

A6004 / Allendale Road: another junction where no improvements are proposed, but where the current conditions are dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. It is particularly important to improve conditions for active travel here, due to the location on the route to Rawlins Academy from Loughborough. The design of the roundabout encourages high vehicle speeds, causing serious danger to cyclists and pedestrians crossing arms of the roundabout, particularly Allendale Road. It needs redesign compliant with LTN1/20, but the urgency is such that temporary measures to reduce vehicle speeds should be implemented as soon as possible.

A6 / A6004 (One Ash): the proposal to signalise all approaches and circulatory of the roundabout has the potential to improve safety. On the southern arm, a toucan crossing is needed (with cyclists and pedestrians able to cross the entire carriageway in a single phase, rather than having to wait on a central island). This would replace the existing unsatisfactory arrangements for cyclists to cross the carriageway going towards Quorn, and is again important because of the location on the route to Rawlins Academy. There is a proposed toucan crossing over the northern arm of the roundabout, but this does not appear to form part of any continuous route for cyclists.

A6 / A46: the existing signalisation of the roundabout is important for cyclists, but arrangements for cyclists on the A6 north of the roundabout (including a crossing of both carriageways) are unsatisfactory. The Broadnook development provides an opportunity to redesign cycle facilities here (possibly with Section 106 funding).

Anthony Kay
Loughborough & District Cycle Users' Campaign